

LEGISLATIVE ADVISORY:

Governor Carney Signs Bill to Reduce Dropout Rate

Legislation sponsored by Representative Matthews and Senator McDowell

WILMINGTON, Del. – Governor John Carney has signed [House Bill 23](#), legislation aimed at reducing the dropout rate in Delaware's public schools.

Representative Sean Matthews and Senator Harris McDowell sponsored the legislation.

"All of Delaware's students deserve an equal opportunity to learn and succeed," said **Governor Carney**. "We know that Delawareans without a high school degree are more likely to be unemployed, and more likely to earn less than those who complete their education. Students who are considering withdrawing from school, and their families, should understand those potential consequences. The changes made in this legislation would help us reach some of those students. Thank you to Representative Matthews, Senator McDowell and all members of the General Assembly for taking on this important issue."

The new law requires that students over the age of 16 who wish to withdraw from school prior to graduation both obtain written consent from their parent or guardian, and attend an exit interview. Schools will inform those students about the potential consequences of dropping out of school, including a greater risk for unemployment and a lower earning potential. The Department of Education will provide materials for the exit interviews. Those interviews also will cover any available support services or programs that may assist the student in pursuing their education, and information about

training and employment opportunities.

“Research and experience has shown that a student dropping out of high school is often a gradual process of disengagement between the student and school community. For the most part, students don’t just drop out because they reach 16 years of age and are allowed to drop out,” said **Representative Matthews**. “Reaching out and engaging these students and their parents before a situation becomes serious are critical to reducing and preventing students from dropping out in the first place. We must take positive steps to engage students and educate them on the significance of dropping out and the challenges it creates for them later in life.”

“Kids who graduate high school are likely to go on to lead stable, productive and in many cases extraordinary lives and we need to do all we can as a state to help them realize that potential,” said **Senator McDowell**. “This new law ensures that some real thought, collaboration, and analysis is a part of the life-altering decision to leave high school.”

Read Governor Carney’s full [Legislative Advisory #4](#) to learn more about legislation recently signed into law.